DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 320 120 CS 010 114

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TITLE A Comparison of Supervising Teachers', Reading Specialists', and Preservice Teachers' Ratings of Student Performance Using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity.
PUB DATE Nov 89
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the College Reading Association (33rd, Philadelphia, PA, November 3-5, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; Higher Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; Reading Consultants; Reading Instruction; *Student Evaluation; *Student Teacher Attitudes; Student Teacher Supervisors; *Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Directed Reading Thinking Activities

ABSTRACT

A study compared the evaluations of junior and senior preservice teachers, supervising teachers, and reading specialists who observed a student's performance using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA). Four groups of subjects participated in the study. The first group consisted of 12 elementary education juniors who had just completed a methods course in reading. The second group contained 18 elementary education seniors who had completed the student teaching semester. The third group consisted of 13 supervising teachers, and the fourth group contained 28 reading specialists. The instrument used to evaluate student performance consisted of nine categories--three of which related to teaching in general and six of which directly pertained to the DRTA. Results indicated that preservice teachers' ratings of student performance using the DRTA compared favorably with those of their supervising teachers. There was agreement in the ratings of the juniors and seniors with the supervising teachers in each of the six competencies that directly pertained to the DRTA. The reading specialists were more variable in their ratings; they rated the student's performance significantly lower than the other groups on all competencies. Findings of this study have implications for evaluating preservice field experiences in elementary reading methods courses. (Two tables of data are included.) (MG)

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A Comparison of Supervising Teachers', Reading Specialists', and Preservice Teachers' Ratings of Student Performance Using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity

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Abstract

This study compares the evaluations of junior and senior preservice teachers, supervising teachers and reading specialists who observed a student's performance using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA). The results of this study indicate that preservice teacher ratings of student performance using the DRTA compare favorably with those of their supervising teachers. There was agreement in the ratings of the juniors and seniors with the supervising teachers in each of the six competencies that directly pertain to the DRTA. The reading specialists, however, were more variable in their ratings; they rated the student's performance significantly lower than the other groups on all competencies. The findings of this study have implications for evaluating preservice field experiences in elementary reading methods courses.

A Comparison of Supervising Teachers', Reading Specialists', and Preservice Teachers' Ratings of Student Performance Using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity

Field experiences which require preservice teachers to observe in classrooms and participate in actual teaching of lessons have become prevalent in teacher education preparation. Specific standards used to evaluate programs by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC, 1986) require early field experiences prior to student teaching. Traditionally, college professors teach the methods courses of which the field experiences are a component but the classroom teacher usually evaluates the student's performance. Occasionally, the student also self-evaluates his or her performance.

A review of the literature, including a recent ERIC search, revealed very few studies pertaining to the simultaneous evaluation of a preservice teacher's performance by groups such as the college supervisors, supervising teachers, content specialists, and the students themselves (Irvine, 1983; Hattie, Olphert, & Cole, 1982; Wheeler & Knoop, 1982). In addition, the recent issues of Summary of Investigations Related to Reading show no studies specifically related to the evaluation of field experiences in reading methods courses.

Briggs, Richardson, & Sefzik (1985) "compared the supervising teacher ratings and student teacher self-ratings of elementary student teaching to determine if there were significant differences or significant relationships between the competency evaluations" (p. 150). The two groups evaluated the performance of student teachers by completing a Likert scale pertaining to five

major competency areas assumed to be essential for success in classroom teaching. Their findings indicated that "there was complete agreement between the evaluations of the student teachers and the supervising teachers in the five competency areas" (p. 158). However, the student teachers evaluated themselves more highly than their supervising teachers.

Irvine (1983) investigated "the relationship between preservice and supervisory teachers' reports of preservice teachers' classroom behavior after completion of a specific training program designed to facilitate self-assessment skills and collegial relationships" (p. 25). Using Georgia's Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments (TPAI), the preservice and supervising teachers evaluated the preservice teachers' performance in 14 competency areas. The findings indicated that "preservice teacher self-ratings of their performance moderately agree with the independent ratings of their supervising teachers" (p. 30).

Wheeler & Knoop (1982) "examined the appraisal of student teaching performance among academic supervisors, field supervisors, and self-ratings" (p. 178). These groups completed the Performance Improvement Guide which is an instrument using a Likert scale to evaluate seven competency areas. The findings indicated that the evaluations of the college and field supervisors correlated highly overall. The self-ratings of the preservice teachers were significantly higher in most categories than their supervisors' evaluations.

Evaluating student performance in reading is important because it helps to improve the students' proficiency in using reading strategies in order to become effective in-service teachers. Evaluating student performance also helps reconcile whether or not there is consistency between what is taught in the reading methods course and what the field supervisors and reading teachers

expect. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to compare the evaluations of junior and senior preservice teachers, supervising teachers and reading specialists who observed a student's performance using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA). In addition, the study investigated whether there was a difference between the evaluations of primary and intermediate supervising teachers.

METHOD

Subjects. Four groups of subjects participated in this study. The first group consisted of 12 elementary education juniors who had just completed a methods course in reading. The second group of students was 18 elementary education seniors who had completed the student teaching semester. In addition, 13 supervising teachers (seven taught in the primary grades and six in the intermediate grades) comprised the third group. The fourth group contained 28 reading specialists, all of whom have master's degrees. All students attended the same college and the teachers and specialists were employed by the school districts in which the students have their field experiences and student teaching assignments.

Instrumentation. The instrument used to evaluate student performance consisted of nine categories, three of which relate to teaching in general (closure, follow-up activity, classroom management) and six which directly pertain to the DRTA (introduction to lesson, vocabulary development, reading for a purpose, discussion, reading to support predictions, and questioning). The instrument was developed by members of the Education Department at Mount Saint Mary's College based on program objectives and competencies. Content validity

was examined by a team of reading experts (people who have doctorates in the field as well as elementary classroom teaching experience) specifically regarding the categories and the descriptors.

Data Collection and Analysis. A videotape was made of a student teacher using the DRTA with a group of fifth grade students. It was shown on separate occasions to each group of subjects who completed the evaluation form by rating the student's performance in each category using a Likert scale with 10 as "outstanding" and 1 as "needs improvement." Comments were also written under each category which indicated strengths and weaknesses. Although a content analysis of these comments was not done for this study, they were used for discussion purposes at the end of the procedure after the subjects had rated the competencies.

Data analysis consisted of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) across the four groups for each competency and for the global score followed by a Tukey post hoc test, where appropriate. In addition t-tests were performed to determine if there were any significant differences between the primary and intermediate supervising teachers for each variable and for the global score.

Results. Descriptive data and results of the ANOVAs are presented in Table 1. Significant differences occurred across the four groups for each of the nine competencies and the global score. Tukey post hoc analyses were thus performed for each competency and the global score. It was found that the reading specialists consistently rated the student's performance significantly lower on all the competencies and the global score. Few other significant differences occurred among the other three groups. The means of the juniors were significantly lower than the means of the seniors for the variables of

"introduction to the lesson" and "classroom management." In addition, the means of the supervising teachers were significantly lower than those of the seniors for the variables of "closure" and "follow-up activity."

Insert Table 1

Descriptive data and t-tests for the primary and intermediate grade supervising teachers are reported in Table 2. In each case there are no significant differences between the evaluations of the primary and intermediate grade supervising teachers.

Insert Table 2

Discussion. The results of this study indicate that preservice teacher ratings of student performance using the DRTA compare favorably with those of their supervising teachers. There was agreement in the ratings of the juniors and seniors with the supervising teachers in each of the six competencies that directly pertain to the DRTA. In addition, the primary and intermediate grade supervising teachers evaluated the student's performance in a similar manner. By examining the standard deviations of these groups, it becomes apparent that they showed little variability in their ratings of each competency and on the global score.

The reading specialists, however, rated the student's performance significantly lower than the other groups on all competencies and the global score, and they were more variable in their ratings. One reason might be that by nature of their training and graduate education in a specialized field, the reading specialists may be more knowledgeable and current about DRTA. Specifically, the reading specialists may have higher expectations and standards due to more extensive training. Whereas, the supervising teachers who work on a regular basis with juniors and seniors may be more cognizant of a beginning teacher's ability. One may also speculate that supervising teachers tend to be sympathetic to student teachers and therefore may not evaluate them rigorously.

The findings of this study have implications for evaluating field experiences in reading methods courses. There was compatibility between student teachers and supervising teachers with regard to expectations for performance using DRTA. Students should have more confidence in the evaluation process. Not only did they evaluate similarly to the supervising teachers but it also does not seem to make a difference whether they are assigned to a primary or intermediate grade teacher for the field experience component. Future research needs to be conducted in order to identify why the reading specialists evaluated the student's performance so differently. This research may also offer the beginnings of a developmental scoring system with expectations for preservice teachers at some point in the continuum.

Using a videotape of a student's performance can be a valuable instructional tool. In subsequent methods courses the professor, after lecturing about and demonstrating the DRTA, used the videotape with current students to evaluate

their understanding of each competency. The discussion that followed each step enabled the professor to assess the student's knowledge and, when necessary, reteach any competency area before the students taught in their field placements.

Field experiences are playing a more important role in the preparation of teachers than ever before. Therefore, the evaluation of the preservice teacher's performance by people other than the course professor is essential. Future studies are needed in this area, particularly in reading methods courses.

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Table 1 Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, and Analyses of Variance for Juniors' Seniors', Supervising Teachers and Reading Specialists' Rating of Nine DRTA Competencies and Global Scores

Competency Area	Juniors N = 12	Seniors N = 18	Supervising Teachers N = 13	Reading Specialist N = 28	
Introduction to Lesson					F
$\bar{X}$	7.25	8.83	8.07	4.92	36.54*
SD	0.86	1.04	0.95	1.74	
Vocabulary Development					F
$\bar{X}$	7.75	7.61	7.00	3.67	31.26*
SD	1.28	1.53	1.41	1.86	
Reading for A Purpose					F
$\bar{X}$	8.16	8.83	8.61	6.25	15.84*
SD	1.19	1.09	0.87	1.81	
Discussion					
$\bar{X}$	7.83	8.00	7.84	5.17	16.67*
SD	1.11	1.37	0.68	2.09	
Reading to Support Predictions					
$\bar{X}$	8.08	8.88	8.23	5.70	22.60*
SD	0.99	0.90	0.72	1.93	
Questioning					
$\bar{X}$	7.50	7.83	7.38	3.46	41.98*
SD	0.90	1.58	1.44	1.71	
Closure					
$\bar{X}$	8.00	8.61	7.00	4.14	35.40*
SD	0.60	1.61	0.70	2.05	
Follow-up Activity					
$\bar{X}$	8.00	9.05	7.30	3.90	38.68*
SD	0.73	0.96	0.75	2.40	
Classroom Management					
$\bar{X}$	7.33	9.16	7.92	5.23	32.88*
SD	1.23	0.98	1.44	1.53	
Global Score					
$\bar{X}$	69.91	77.05	69.38	41.04	68.55*
SD	3.84	7.69	5.18	12.13	

* Significant, P .0001

Table 2 Means, Standard Deviations, and T-Tests for Primary and Intermediate Supervising Teachers of Student Performance Using the DRTA In Nine Competency Areas and Global Scores.

Competency area	Primary (N = 7)	Intermediate (N = 6)	T-Value	P
Introduction to Lesson				
$\bar{X}$	8.00	8.16	-0.30	NS
SD	1.15	0.75		
Vocabulary Development				
$\bar{X}$	6.71	7.33	-0.77	NS
SD	1.70	1.03		
Reading for a Purpose				
$\bar{X}$	8.71	8.50	0.43	NS
SD	0.75	1.04		
Discussion				
$\bar{X}$	7.57	8.16	-1.66	NS
SD	0.78	0.40		
Reading to Support Predictions				
$\bar{X}$	8.57	7.83	2.06	NS
SD	0.53	0.75		
Questioning				
$\bar{X}$	7.14	7.66	-0.63	NS
SD	1.86	0.81		
Closure				
$\bar{X}$	7.00	7.00	0.00	NS
SD	0.57	0.89		
Follow-Up Activity				
$\bar{X}$	7.28	7.33	-0.11	NS
SD	.95	0.51		
Classroom Management				
$\bar{X}$	8.42	7.33	1.42	NS
SD	1.27	1.50		
Global Score				
$\bar{X}$	69.42	69.33	0.03	NS
SD	5.99	4.63		